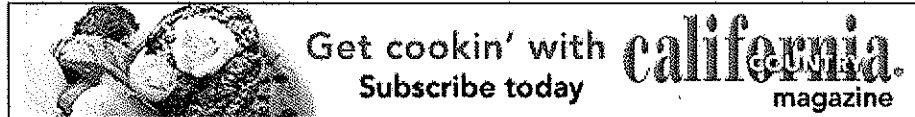




# CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION



## Commentary: Are you smoke testing your diesel pickup?

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By Cynthia Cory

If you are based in California, own two or more diesel vehicles that you drive on the road that are the 2007 model year or older and are 6,001 pounds gross vehicle weight rating or greater, these vehicles need an annual smoke emission inspection. While long-haul truck operators have heard of the Periodic Smoke Inspection Program that has been in place for the past 18 years, it is news for most farmers and ranchers. PSIP is a self-initiated smoke inspection test--and you will get no advance notice about it until you receive a random audit letter from the California Air Resources Board asking for your past two years of records. Diesel vehicles covered by PSIP include pickups, flatbeds, semi-trucks, utility vehicles, vans, transit buses and school buses.



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If you only own one diesel vehicle over 6,001 GVWR, no matter how you use it, you are exempt from PSIP. All diesel vehicles over 6,001 GVWR that are exclusively personal use--driving to church, school, grocery store, etc.--are also exempt. But any agricultural activities are not considered personal use and would require the vehicle to be subject to PSIP, unless it was your only vehicle. If one diesel vehicle over 6,001 GVWR is exclusively personal use and one is used for farming, you are exempt. It is only when you have two or more diesel vehicles over 6,001 GVWR used for non-personal use that PSIP applies. PSIP does not include gas-powered vehicles.



PSIP goes into effect when diesel vehicles are in their fourth model year. If you have a 2007 model, it will need to be inspected by Jan. 1, and every year thereafter. If you have a 2010 model, you have until Jan. 1, 2014, before it needs an inspection.

Smoke testing must conform to the Society of Automotive Engineers J1667 snap-acceleration procedure and be performed by using an SAE J1667 smoke meter. Because the smoke meter equipment costs thousands of dollars, it is more cost-effective for most vehicle owners to take their vehicles to a certified smoke testing facility. Such a facility is the equivalent of a standard smog test facility for everyday domestic vehicles, except that the test results are held in your file rather than electronically submitted to the state.

Engines with excessive smoke emissions have to be repaired and all records must be maintained for two years. Those records could be requested for review during random audits conducted by a CARB representative. For Farm Bureau members who may be just learning about this law, it's important to have that first inspection done on each qualified vehicle as soon as possible, and to make sure you

stay on an annual test schedule. While the program is self-enforced, the consequences of nonconformance could cost fleet owners \$500 in penalties per vehicle, per year.

These truck engines need to be equipped with an "Emission Control Label" that verifies the engine meets California emission standards. These are put on the engine when it's manufactured. If the label is missing or not readable, regulators may charge an additional penalty. An authorized dealer should be able to help replace an engine label if one is needed.

The cost of the test at a smoke testing facility is typically less than \$100 per truck, and takes about a half-hour to complete. A regularly updated list of smoke testing facilities throughout California can be found on the CARB website at [arb.ca.gov/enf/hdvp/hdvp.htm](http://arb.ca.gov/enf/hdvp/hdvp.htm), which also provides more details about the PSIP program. To make it easier to maintain proper PSIP records, the CARB Enforcement Division has also posted on this site an electronic audit table that fleet owners can download to keep their inspection and repair records current.

PSIP is a separate program from smog check, with which most of us are already familiar. A wrench got thrown into the works on Jan. 1, when diesel passenger cars and trucks that are 1997 model year and newer and 14,000 GVWR or smaller were included for the first time in the smog check program. If your diesel vehicle is included in this expansion of smog check, you will be notified through the registration renewal process. The diesel smog check program requires all California vehicles that fit the size and age specifications to undergo emissions checks every other year. The new requirement does not affect the smog check program in place for gas-powered vehicles.

Confusion has arisen because the expansion of the smog check program means that diesel vehicles in model years 1997-2007 and between 6,001 and 14,000 pounds GVWR could be regulated under both PSIP and smog check.

CARB tells us it is aware of this overlap and is looking at how to rectify it. It has tentatively proposed that the 1997 and newer diesel trucks that are below 14,000 GVWR get smog check the first year and the PSIP test the second, so there would be an emissions test every year.

Farm Bureau and other business groups are working to eliminate the PSIP requirement for diesel vehicles that are already subject to the diesel smog check requirement for vehicles between 6,001 and 14,000 pounds that are 1997 and newer. Those amendments will go before the ARB for a vote on Oct. 21. We will keep you posted.

#### **More information**

For more information about the state Periodic Smoke Inspection Program, see a fact sheet posted on the California Farm Bureau website at [www.cfbf.com/psip](http://www.cfbf.com/psip). To determine if your diesel vehicles qualify under the regulations, see the state Air Resources board website at [www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/truckstop/truckstop.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/truckstop/truckstop.htm). The site includes fact sheets, information about financial assistance and other recourses.

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